



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

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## Australia's unemployment rate at 5.2 per cent in December 2011

Australia's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 5.2 per cent in December, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) said today.

The ABS reported the number of people employed decreased by 29,300 to 11,421,300 in December. The decrease in employment was driven by a drop in part-time employment, down 53,700 people to 3,370,300, and was offset by an increase in full-time employment, up 24,500 people to 8,051,000. The decrease in seasonally adjusted part-time employment was driven by weaker than usual growth during the December period, which was particularly noticeable for women aged 15 to 24.

The number of people unemployed decreased by 3,800 people to 629,900 in December, the ABS reported.

The ABS monthly aggregate hours worked series showed an increase in December, up 5.6 million hours to 1,622.0 million hours.

The ABS reported a decrease in the labour force participation rate of 0.3 percentage points in December to 65.2 per cent.

Contrary to recent media reports, the ABS does measure underemployment, and has done so every quarter since February 1978. The most recent estimate of the seasonally adjusted underemployment rate was 7.3 per cent in last month's November 2011 issue. Combined with November's unemployment rate of 5.3 per cent, the latest estimate of total seasonally adjusted labour force underutilisation was 12.6 per cent. For more information on underemployment and underutilisation, please refer to the article 'Understanding Labour Force' which is published every month in *Labour Force, Australia* (cat. no. 6202.0).

More details are in the December 2011 issue of *Labour Force, Australia* (cat. no. 6202.0), as well as the upcoming December 2011 issue of *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed* (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001) due for release next week on January 25. Both publications are available for free download (after release) from the ABS website - [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au).

### Media note:

When reporting ABS data the Australian Bureau of Statistics (or ABS) must be attributed as the source.

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